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Summary record of the 67th meeting
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Chairman: Ms. Wensley ..... (Australia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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00-43755 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 151: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/C.5/54/55)

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/54/30, A/54/711, A/54/733, A/54/763, A/54/765, A/54/795, A/54/797, A/54/800, A/54/826, A/54/832, A/54/841 and Add.8, A/54/859; A/C.5/54/49)

(c) Relocation of South Africa to the group of Member States set out in paragraph 3 (c) of General Assembly resolution 43/232 (*continued*) (A/53/1009)

1. **Ms. Sun Minqin** (China) said that her delegation had always attached great importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations carried out under the Charter. The backstopping provided by the support account was indispensable in implementing peacekeeping mandates, and adequate human and financial resources must be ensured for the support account in the light of the current situation. Her delegation had noted that four additional posts had been proposed for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and she sought clarification as to whether the Committee had the mandate to take a decision before the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had discussed the matter.

2. Her delegation supported the request of South Africa to be relocated from group B to group C, and hoped that the question could be resolved at the current part of the resumed session. It also noted that some Member States had expressed interest in discussing the peacekeeping scale of assessments, but reiterated that the inclusion of that topic in the Committee's programme of work should be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

3. In the view of her delegation there was no direct link between the financial crisis which had plagued the Organization for many years and the existing peacekeeping scale. The current system, based on the principle of capacity to pay, was fully in keeping with the spirit of the Charter and had proven effective over time. She called on all Member States, the major contributor in particular, to demonstrate political will by fulfilling their financial obligations under the Charter.

4. Her delegation endorsed the statement made by Nigeria at the 65th meeting on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

5. It was the position of her delegation that the peacekeeping scale should reflect the principles of capacity to pay and of collective but differentiated responsibility. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China understood its responsibility for world peace and security and had fulfilled its financial obligations to the United Nations with regard to peacekeeping. But her delegation resolutely opposed setting floor or ceiling rates for the permanent members of the Security Council, since that would be a violation of the principle of capacity to pay. It would also oppose any attempt to shift the financial burden on to developing countries.

6. **Mr. Petrič** (Slovenia) said that, because of the need to preserve consensus among Member States and continue the reform of the Organization, his delegation supported the proposal to begin a dialogue on the future of United Nations peacekeeping activities, including a new scale of assessments for peacekeeping.

7. Peacekeeping had reached a critical juncture, and the past two years had given new hope to the concept of collective security, through multi-dimensional operations in Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone, and the prospect of an operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Maintaining that new momentum for peacekeeping depended very much on a resolution of the crisis in Sierra Leone and on the ability of Member States to provide financing.

8. The changes which had taken place in the world since the basis for financing peacekeeping operations had been established 27 years earlier demanded changes in the peacekeeping scale. In that context, he drew attention to the letter of the four successor States to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (A/54/725), expressing their opinion that there was no basis for assessment of a Member State which had ceased to exist, or of a State which had not yet applied for membership, namely, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Numerous such anomalies had made the current peacekeeping scale irrelevant. Some should be easy to correct; others would require more time and negotiation. Nevertheless, dialogue among Member States was necessary to reach an agreed solution to that urgent problem.

9. Slovenia was well aware that, under a new scale, its assessment would be increased in accordance with its current level of economic development. Because of its commitment to the United Nations and to peacekeeping, however, it would participate actively in the establishment of a revised scale of assessments with a view to providing the most effective administrative, budgetary and financial arrangements possible.

10. **Mr. Priedkalns** (Latvia) said that his delegation supported the efforts of the European Union, the United States and other Member States to find a solution to the funding of peacekeeping operations and to reform the scale in order to increase efficiency. The elements of the scale should be discussed thoroughly and openly in the Committee. Latvia supported the position of the European Union regarding payment of assessed contributions in full and on time and the principle of capacity to pay. It also believed that there were sound arguments for adopting a ceiling for contributions. It was inappropriate for only a few Members to carry a disproportionately large share of the expenses, and by implication, of political influence. Excessive dependence on a few countries was not sound policy.

11. Latvia had thus decided to review its peacekeeping assessment and to consider a gradual process of renouncing the benefit it currently enjoyed through its group C status. It would implement its decision at the appropriate time, in the light of the decisions of the Committee regarding the scale.

12. **Mr. Zahid** (Morocco) paid tribute to those who, by their service in United Nations peacekeeping operations, risked their lives in the service of peace. His delegation also associated itself with the statement by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

13. The current situation led his delegation to believe that a review of the special scale for peacekeeping operations was necessary in order to reflect new realities. The Committee should examine the issue in depth and give consideration to the many views expressed in the debate. Any examination of the question must take into account the special responsibility for peacekeeping operations of permanent members of the Security Council, the capacity of economically developed countries in that area, and the limited capacity and responsibility of less developed countries, African countries in particular, for the financing of such operations.

14. His country took a special interest in peacekeeping, as it was actively involved in preparations for its participation in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and its significant participation in MINURSO. It would continue to share its experience drawn from 40 years of participation in peacekeeping.

15. **Ms. Achouri** (Tunisia) said that, like many Member States participating in the debate, Tunisia had always contributed to peacekeeping operations, and in fact was preparing to participate in the newest mission on the conflict-plagued African continent, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

16. The recent crisis in Sierra Leone had drawn attention to the question of peacekeeping financing and to the need for a coherent system. There had been calls for the reform of the current ad hoc system for some ten years, and she hoped that the Committee would finally face the issue. Everyone was aware of the difficulties, especially financial, which the Secretariat faced in fulfilling all the mandates established by the Security Council.

17. The Committee must conduct a substantive debate on the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations, maintaining as its guiding principles the special responsibility for peacekeeping of the permanent members of the Security Council and capacity to pay, neither of which had been questioned by any of the speakers in the discussion thus far. The current group system should be maintained, but movement between groups should be made easier. The situation would be greatly improved, however, if all members met their peacekeeping obligations in full.

18. **Ms. Ibraimova** (Kyrgyzstan) said that peacekeeping, although not mentioned in the Charter, had become one of the vital functions of the Organization. Since the establishment of the first peacekeeping mission in 1948, the United Nations had played a key role in resolving wars and conflicts. The people of many countries were grateful to the United Nations for promoting peace, security and stability in their homelands.

19. Her delegation supported the proposal to continue the discussions on revision of the peacekeeping scale of assessments.

20. **Mr. Pérez Otermin** (Uruguay) said that, although his country was small in size, it had contributed approximately 10,000 troops to peacekeeping operations over the years. Its support for such operations would continue, whatever the financial or human cost. His delegation understood that the maintenance of peace and security was one of the fundamental duties of the United Nations, but it did not believe that it was its most important duty. The Charter had established others of equal value, including the duty of States to assist in the development of other States, which was the greatest contribution they could make to peace. A dollar contributed towards development was much more profitable than a dollar intended for peacekeeping.

21. His delegation fully supported the request of South Africa to be relocated from group B to group C.

22. Concerning the peacekeeping scale, his delegation was always open to new ideas, but a number of doubts had been expressed about the procedure being followed and whether the Committee was the appropriate venue for a review of the scale. It would be helpful to hear the expert opinions of the relevant Secretariat departments and United Nations bodies on that subject.

23. As a member of the Group of 77, his delegation fully endorsed the statement made by Nigeria on its behalf. His delegation would not support any change to the peacekeeping scale of assessments that would mean that the rich countries paid less and the poor countries paid more. Such an outcome ran counter to the Charter, all resolutions on the subject, and rational domestic economic policy.

24. Finally, because of their veto power, the five permanent members of the Security Council could not be put on the same footing as the other members of the Council or the other Members of the United Nations and should, therefore, bear a larger share of the burden of contributing to peacekeeping.

25. **Mr. Abdalla** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It also supported the statement made by the representative of Singapore, who had expressed the views of many developing countries. The United Nations had a paramount role to play in peacekeeping operations.

26. Consideration of the peacekeeping scale should be postponed until the scale of assessments for the regular budget had been discussed, since the former was based on the latter, and the issue was, in any case, not an item on the agenda for the current session. Any steps taken to include it as an agenda item would be improper and in contravention of rules 13 to 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and could create a precedent. The Committee's programme of work was, in any case, already extremely full. Nevertheless he was willing to listen to delegations' views, subject to the approval of the Group of 77 and China, on the understanding that that would not be in any way interpreted as tacit agreement to participate in any formal or informal consultations on the issue at the current session.

27. He questioned the validity of rejecting the current system on the ground that it had been employed for more than 27 years and was therefore obsolete: the current meeting of the Committee would have little legitimacy if the Charter of the United Nations, adopted 55 years previously, were likewise to be considered obsolete.

28. **Mr. Šerkšnys** (Lithuania) said that his delegation aligned itself with the statement made at the 65th meeting by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. Peacekeeping was the essential function of the United Nations, and effective arrangements for its implementation must be in place. Accordingly, discussions should be held on the comprehensive revision of the current scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations, which had been established in 1973 on an ad hoc basis, to bring it into line with current economic realities. The revised scale should ensure that peacekeeping expenses were distributed equitably according to Member States' capacity to pay and should be based on clear and objective economic criteria. Lithuania was strongly committed to the principle of capacity to pay, since it had been over-assessed for a number of years as a result of the distortions created by the scheme of limits. Capacity to pay should be a core element of the methodologies for calculating Member States' assessed contributions to the Organization's budgets.

29. Lithuania admired the decision of some countries to move voluntarily from group C to group B of the peacekeeping scale. However, such unilateral steps did not address the main concern, which was the revision of the methodology for calculating peacekeeping contributions. Consensus should be reached on objective criteria and methods for grouping countries according to their economic development and, in particular, their national per capita income. Lithuania was prepared to consider all proposals on that subject, including the establishment of new country groupings or the introduction of a mechanism that would provide for gradual and incremental increases in the shares of some countries.

30. **Mr. Volski** (Georgia) said that he shared the views of a number of delegations on the great importance of the issue of peacekeeping financing and on the fact that the current state of peacekeeping financing was clearly inadequate to cope with contemporary problems. The excessive amount which had been assessed on Georgia since it had joined the Organization had been calculated on the basis of economic information from the time when Georgia had been part of the Soviet Union, and did not reflect factors such as exchange rates and the damage to Georgia's economy as a result of war. The scale of assessments undoubtedly required more careful consideration and, if necessary, a thorough revision. In that connection, the arguments put forward by the United States delegation seemed well founded. The Committee must reach a definite decision at the next session of the General Assembly. Financial problems could not be allowed to erode the Organization's responsibility for preserving peace, stability and human life, *inter alia*, in Georgia.

31. **Mr. Daka** (Zambia) said that he associated himself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and that he supported any measure that would improve the financing of peacekeeping operations. The current problems with the financing of such operations, especially in Africa, could not be ignored. He thanked the countries which had voluntarily increased their peacekeeping assessments. It must be borne in mind that development was not possible without peace. Lastly, he fully supported the request submitted by South Africa for relocation from group B to group C.

32. **Mr. Albrecht** (South Africa) thanked the delegations and groups of countries which had supported his Government's request for reclassification. He asked when informal consultations would be held on the issue, and trusted that a decision would be taken at the current part of the resumed fifty-fourth session.

33. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said, in reply to a question posed by the Cuban delegation at the preceding meeting, that the level of financial and human resources proposed for the support account was adequate to support current peacekeeping operations. The amount proposed took into account, *inter alia*, the establishment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), as well as the extension of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). Budget proposals in relation to peacekeeping were made on the basis of what was known and what could be foreseen. His introductory statement on agenda item 151 had underscored the volatility and unpredictability of peacekeeping operations; in that connection, he recalled that, the previous autumn, the Committee had been asked to approve additional resources for the support account after the General Assembly had approved the level initially proposed. If developments during the year so required, the Secretariat would re-evaluate the requirements of the support account.

34. In reply to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he said that the rapidly deployable mission headquarters had never been operational. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 53/12 and 53/58, had requested the Secretary-General to further develop that concept. Accordingly, the concept of a rapid deployment management unit had been developed in the light of changes in the nature and scope of peacekeeping activities; details of the proposal could be found in document A/54/800, paragraphs 18 to 49.

35. Lastly, in reply to the Chinese delegation's question as to whether the Committee had a mandate to take a decision on the request for posts for the proposed rapid deployment management unit before the latter had been considered by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, he said that it was not for the Secretariat to answer that question. However, the Secretariat had included that request for

posts in its proposed budget for the support account on the assumption that the Committee would be in a position to take a decision. Since a stand-by capacity was essential, he hoped that the Committee would endorse the Secretary-General's proposals in that regard.

36. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) asked whether informal consultations would be scheduled, before the end of the current part of the resumed session, on the review of the scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations, since many delegations, including his own, had requested such consultations.

37. **The Chairman** said that, although some delegations had expressed an interest in following up the formal discussions held on the subject, others felt that there should be no such follow-up. There was a wide range of opinions on whether the Committee had time to consider that issue and on the procedures for doing so. Moreover, the Committee's programme of work at the current part of the resumed session was very full. She suggested that the Bureau of the Committee should discuss the subject the following day, with a view to proposing a decision based on the Committee's programme of work and in consultation with the coordinators of informal consultations on various items. The Bureau would also decide when to schedule informal consultations on South Africa's request for reclassification.

38. **Mr. Abdalla** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Chairman had addressed a number of his concerns. His delegation supported the request made by many Member States for the holding of informal consultations.

Agenda item 118: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Agenda item 164: Human resources management (*continued*)

Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (continued) (A/C.5/54/54)

39. **Mr. Beissel** (Office of Human Resources Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (A/C.5/54/54), said that it covered the first three months of 2000. It indicated that the number of type II gratis personnel had been reduced from 18 to 1 during that period. In a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/54/734), the Secretary-General had announced the Organization's intention to accept gratis personnel for a second time in relation to the conduct of forensic investigations in Kosovo. Currently about 50 gratis personnel were working in Kosovo.

40. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Secretary-General's report on gratis personnel had been submitted in response to a request, in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 51/243, for quarterly reports on the acceptance of gratis personnel, with a view to ensuring compliance with the provisions of that resolution. During the period from 1 January to 31 March 2000 the number of gratis personnel had been reduced from 18 to 1. The one remaining person was a water and sanitation expert working for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Field Administration and Logistics Division and assigned to UNTAET. That individual's contract was due to expire at the end of May 2000.

41. The Secretary-General's report also provided data on type I gratis personnel. In paragraph 13 of its report on gratis personnel (A/52/890), the Advisory Committee had indicated that the personnel of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) worked under special service agreements and that support costs were funded from the frozen assets or voluntary contributions related to Security Council resolutions 778 (1992) and 986 (1995). The Advisory Committee had also indicated that type I gratis personnel were governed by administrative instruction ST/AI/231/Rev.1, which applied to gratis personnel performing functions of a purely technical and operational nature funded through voluntary contributions.

42. The Advisory Committee had sought further information on the request for gratis personnel with specialized forensic skills for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, since no provision for such personnel had been included in the proposed budget for the Tribunal for 2000. However, the newly appointed Prosecutor had indicated that investigative work should be conducted and that additional help would be needed. The Advisory Committee had requested that the issue should be clarified in the Fifth Committee (A/54/645, para. 42). The appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee and approved by the General

Assembly in resolution 54/239 did not provide for the investigative work associated with the additional crime sites. The Secretary-General, in his letter to the President of the General Assembly (A/54/734), had indicated that the proper investigation of events in Kosovo, and the effective implementation of the mandate of the Tribunal, dictated that the remaining sites should be investigated; that that work could not be accomplished during 2000 without the additional assistance of Member States; that he intended to approve the Prosecutor's request to accept gratis personnel for the purpose of conducting forensic investigations in Kosovo in 2000 for a limited period of six months; and that the Tribunal's acceptance of gratis personnel would comply with General Assembly resolutions 51/243 and 52/234.

43. **Mr. Hays** (United States of America) recalled that his delegation had accepted, with some misgivings, the General Assembly's 1997 decision to eliminate most type II gratis personnel from the United Nations system. At that time, United States military officers had accounted for 13 of the 111 gratis military officers in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As his delegation had feared, the Organization had lost much-needed expertise for the planning and execution of peacekeeping operations. The current problems in Sierra Leone might be partly attributable to that diminished capacity.

44. General Assembly resolution 51/243 had provided for exceptions allowing the temporary use of highly specialized gratis personnel in specific circumstances. Such circumstances would continue to arise and the Organization must be able to obtain the necessary expertise quickly if it was to fulfil its mandates. The mechanism for addressing those needs must not be further restricted. He recalled that the Secretary-General, on 5 October 1999, had appealed to the Fifth Committee to give the Secretariat the flexibility it needed to respond promptly and effectively to new challenges. The Member States should ensure that such flexibility was available, since it would ultimately serve to meet their needs.

45. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that her delegation had stated repeatedly its conviction that the use of gratis personnel must be in compliance with the relevant General Assembly decisions and resolutions. The Organization should improve its personnel planning so that it would not have to resort to the excessive use of gratis personnel. Whenever exceptions were sought, the General Assembly must be provided with precise, full and specific information so that it could take an informed decision. In addition, the Advisory Committee had stated that information should be submitted on the selection process and on the participation of the Office of Human Resources Management in that process. Instead of resorting to the use of gratis personnel, the Secretariat should continue to include specific staffing needs in its budget proposals.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.